

Winter 2024 Theology Exam

Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are the pastor at Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church. You are leading a confirmation class for high school students, and the topic of this class session is the Nicene Creed. The following conversation comes up in the class:

Ophelia: What were the ancient leaders of the church trying to say when they wrote that Jesus was “eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father”? It sounds like they were repeating themselves a lot.

Ahnoush: I always thought that they were trying to explain that Jesus was God.

Jamir: That can’t be right – John 1 says that Jesus was the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Wasn’t Jesus human?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: (Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the two natures of Christ**. In the essay, you must identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in *The Book of Confessions*. The Nicene Creed may be used in the essay, but it will not count as one of the three (3) required citations.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to the class. You must address the issues raised by Ophelia, Ahnoush, and Jamir.

Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are the pastor of First Presbyterian Church. You are teaching an adult Bible study on Romans, and this week the group is wrestling with Romans 12:19 (NRSV)—“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” The following conversation takes place:

Norman: I find this passage really hard to accept. All the talk of wrath and vengeance seems so at odds with God’s love and grace!

Marcie: This verse would make sense if it were in the Old Testament, where God is wrathful. But God changed to ruling us with love and grace in the New Testament.

Hela: I can’t imagine a God who doesn’t exact vengeance upon those who defy God’s will. Without God’s wrath, there is no accountability in the Christian message.

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of the **wrath of God**. In the essay, you must use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology (sources before 1900), modern theology (sources since 1900). Romans chapter 12 may be used in the essay, but it will not count as one of the required resources.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond directly to Norman, Marcie, and Hela.

Section III: Application to Ministry

You are pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church. The session is considering ways to respond to the changing demographics in the neighborhood. To aid their deliberations, you lead them in a study of A Brief Statement of Faith, in which the following conversation takes place:

Debbie: This confession reminds us that the Holy Spirit is always with the church, but we are talking about outside the walls of the church. I'm not as sure that the Spirit operates beyond the church.

Michael: I always assume that our relationship with the Spirit is personal and doesn't have anything to do with anyone else, inside or outside the church.

Andre: The Holy Spirit is so unpredictable. How can we know that the Spirit is guiding our church's outreach in the neighborhood?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the Holy Spirit at work in the world**. In the essay, you must use A Brief Statement of Faith, the Scriptures, and at least one source from classical theology (sources before 1900).
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to the session. You must address the comments of Debbie, Michael, and Andre.